# Attention Writers: Never Use These Phrases. Seriously, We’re Not Kidding.

**11 essay mistakes that ought to be outlawed**

**#1: “Since the beginning of time…”**

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[*Thinkstickphotos.con*](http://thinkstickphotos.con/)

*Variations:* Throughout the whole of history; since man first appeared on the Earth; since Adam and Eve.

*Example:* “Since the beginning of time, countries have fought in wars.”

*Why It’s Outlawed:* These statements are vague, hyperbolic, and very difficult to prove as we have no historical reports on the moment time began.

**#2: “My paper is going to be about ….”**

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*Variations:* Hi, my name is \_\_\_and I am going to tell you about \_\_;  
This paragraph is about….

*Example:* “Hi, My name is Bryce and I am going to tell you about the reproductive process of turtles.”

*Why It’s Outlawed:* Just tell us. Don’t tell us what you’re going to tell us or write how you’re going to write about it. If using phrases like these help you to get started on a draft, that’s fine. Just remember to remove them before submitting your final version.

**#3: “Kind of”**

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*Via*[*thinkstockphotos.com*](http://thinkstockphotos.com/)

*Variations:* kinda; sort of; sorta

*Example:* “The War of 1812 was kind of an important turning point in the history of the United States.”

*Why It’s Outlawed:* Using “kind of” and “sort of” makes you sound wishy-washy and unsure of your argument. Was it an important turning point or wasn’t it? And sorta isn’t a word at all.

**#4: “Very”**

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*Via*[*thinkstockphotos.com*](http://www.thinkstockphotos.com/)

Variations: so so; very very

*Example:* “Melissa is very very pregnant.”

*Why It’s Outlawed:* Very is a word that is often over-used. And for God’s sake, never say it twice. Be sure you are adding meaning, not It weakening the point you are trying to make. Cross it out!

**#5 “A wise man once said…”**

*Variation:* We don’t want to hear about wise women either.

*Example:* “A wise man once said: A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush” and that’s why its better to hold on to your money.”

*Why It’s Outlawed:* Who is this “wise man” you speak of? If you can find the source, identify it. If you are quoting a commonly used idiom or cliché, chances are you should cross it out and use your own words instead.

**#6 The reason why is because…**

*When you write those words, your reader wants to kill you and so do we.*  *Example:* “Macbeth and Lady Macbeth decide to murder King Duncan. The reason why is because they aren’t very nice and want Macbeth to become the next king.” *Why It’s Outlawed:* The phrase “the reason why is because” is grammatically incorrect and unnecessary. Cross out these four words, “The reason why is,” and combine the remaining words with the previous sentence to make one sentence. Then, re-read the sentence. It still makes sense, doesn’t it?

**#7 “It’s just my opinion but …”**

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[*skreened.com*](http://skreened.com/3coo/i-am-the-yellow-king)

Example: “It’s just my opinion but I think Mathew McConaughey is the yellow king in True Detective. He is blond after all.”

Why It’s Outlawed: Own it! The whole point of an essay is to express your point of view. Delete this timid phrase and any others like it.

**#8 “Like, like, like, like”**

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*Via*[*abrahamingle.com*](http://www.abrahamingle.com/tag/neo-luddism/)

*Example:* “The Supreme Court made like the wrong decision in Bush vs. Gore. Like the course of history was decided by a hanging chad.”

*Why It’s Outlawed:* If the word like appears in your writing and it is not used as a verb (“to like”) or as a synonym for “similar to,” remove it immediately. Enough said.

**#9 “Umm, things”**

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*Via*[*thinkstockphotos.com*](http://thinkstockphotos.com/)

*Variations:* Stuff; a lot of stuff; a lot of things

*Example:* “There were a lot of things wrong with the way the Southern states viewed slavery.”

*Why It’s Outlawed:* Most of the time, there’s a more specific and accurate word than things you could use in your writing that would strengthen your argument. In the case of the example, a good writer would look for a more powerful word or phrase that means “things wrong with” such as faults, errors, or defects.

**#10. “I hope you liked this essay. That’s all I have to say.”**

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*Via*[*thinkstockphotos.com*](http://thinkstockphotos.com/)

*Variations:* …And that’s what my paper was about; The End; I’m finished writing now.

*Example:* “I hoped you liked my essay about why kangaroos are dangerous. Thanks for reading.”

*Why It’s Outlawed:* Your conclusion is your last opportunity to persuade your reader of your position not to beg your reader to like you.

**#11 “LOL “**

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*Via*[*thinkstockphotos.com*](http://thinkstockphotos.com/)

*Variations:* Grt, OMG, WDYT, IDK, JK

*Example: “*The ending of The Diary of Anne Frank was so sad OMG.”

*Why It’s Outlawed:* Text-speak does not belong in a formal essay. Such acronyms and abbreviations are general and vague. Expressing outrage in writing demands more than an “OMG” and joy should be represented more than by a smiley face. OMG and LOL have no place in writing. Unless, of course, you want your teacher to LOL!